

## Jerusalem the Holy City

REV. R. P. DENNY.

*Reprinted from the "Southern Cross."*

THE unique position of Jerusalem calls for notice. It stands on the crest of a range of mountains running north and south; and at one point is at the very extremity of the range, like an elevated promontory. On three sides it is surrounded by deep ravines, the banks of which are in places just mounds of ancient rubbish, the debris of a score of sieges, and the accumulation of three thousand years. Just outside the walls a band of explorers sank a vertical shaft which touched bottom one hundred and twenty feet below the present surface. When one recalls the splendor and solidity of the Herodian city and the glorious temple of marble and gold so extensive and massive and strong, which took forty-six years to build, and realizes that of that temple, as well as of the gorgeous palaces and fortresses, every stone was displaced and the site turned into a wilderness, one may conceive the mass of debris that lies under the present city. Jerusalem has been taken or besieged more than twenty times, and on each occasion was destroyed either wholly or in part.

One result of these destructive sieges is the difficulty of identifying with absolute certainty a number of the Holy Places. This does not, of course, affect the piety of pilgrims, who are not concerned with the scientific accuracy of archaeological studies. It is sufficient to know that here in this very city Our Lord labored, suffered, and died. The general topography of the place is not changed. For example, the Brook Kedron is still there which Our Lord crossed many times when passing between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet and Bethany.

The Brook Kedron, known also as the Valley of Jehosaphat and the Valley of St. Mary, stands where it did, running down the east side of the city. It is now many feet above its former level, and whereas it contained running water in the time of Our Lord, it is now quite dry except when torrential rains fall. Some authorities say that a subterranean stream still runs. The Jews have a

tradition that the General Judgment will take place in the Valley of Jehosaphat, which from time immemorial has been the burial ground of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It is said that Jews from all parts of the world have expressed a dying wish to be buried in this valley, and their remains have in some cases been sent long distances in compliance with this deathbed request. Moslems have adopted this tradition, and many Moslem tombs are to be seen right up the side of the valley and close to the very walls of the city. Some writers call it the Valley of the Tombs.

#### THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

Another site, the authenticity of which is unquestioned, is that of the Garden of Gethsemane, in which the Franciscan Fathers, who have the custody of the place, have excavated a basilica of the third or fourth century. At the time of my visit they were engaged in rebuilding this edifice, the foundations being sound and well preserved. The locality is undoubtedly the scene of Our Lord's agony, but the face of the landscape has changed materially. Guides (who sometimes tell travellers what they want to be told) point out a gnarled old tree, shoved up in the timber, as the identical tree under which Our Lord suffered. Unfortunately for this pious legend, history tells us that Titus, when he destroyed Jerusalem A. D. 70, felled every tree in the vicinity to make crosses for the Jews. "That same moral and spiritual condition which set up the Cross for Jesus, finished its course by crucifying the nation that murdered Him. Most literally this happened in the days when Titus used up all the trees near Jerusalem to make crosses for the Jews."

Another on the same subject says:—"The Jews had forced the Romans to crucify their Christ, and though they had regarded this punishment with especial horror, they and their children were crucified in myriads by the Romans outside their own walls till room was wanting and wood failed." But though trees may be destroyed rocks will last, and there is a rock still pointed out near the gateway of the Garden of Gethsemane where, according to a received tradition, the Apostles remained when Our Lord said to them 'Sit ye here while I go yonder and

pray.' One may reverently and sadly recall Our Lord's gentle rebuke when He found the three chosen ones asleep: 'Couldst thou not then watch one hour with me?"

The Brook Kedron runs practically from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea via Jericho, the way of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. It is a fearful, rocky, barren gorge, fit place for robbers. Even to-day it is regularly patrolled by gendarmes fully armed on the lookout for bandits who lie in wait for unwary pilgrims. Under Turkish rule it was said that the gendarmes were worse than the thieves. The descent is exceedingly steep, and brings out the remarkable formation of the country.

Jerusalem, 33 miles from the Mediterranean, is 2,600 feet above sea level; distant only 15 miles from the Dead Sea. Jerusalem stands about 4,000 feet above it, the Dead Sea being 1,300 feet below sea level, and the lowest part of the earth's surface.

#### A WATERLESS CITY.

Bounded on two sides by pure desert, and on a third by salt water, Palestine is almost an oasis.

In places the sands are slowly encroaching on good land, and on the edge of the desert there is not a superabundance of water. Yet the land is a fruitful one, and it is water that makes it so. Experts assert that subterranean water is plentiful. There are numerous springs in many parts of the level country, and on the plains vegetation grows freely. One sees green trees flourishing all the year round without any apparent encouragement from the soil and no visible supply of water. With irrigation there is a great future in store for the low-lying country in the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon. The site of Jerusalem was no doubt chosen on account of its strategic value rather than for its supply of precious fluid, for the elevation on which Mount Sion and Mount Moriah stand is a badly watered and somewhat sterile plateau of limestone. Its only spring is an intermittent one, and there is no permanent running water nearer than the Jordan. The elevation of the city makes an adequate supply of natural water almost impossible without the intervention

of human effort, and until the advent of the allied troops, nothing whatever had been done in this direction for centuries. The Pool of Ezechias was excavated about 700 B.C.

#### SANITARY CONDITIONS.

The Turks have no reason to be proud of the state in which they left Jerusalem at the time of their departure in 1917. There were no sanitary arrangements whatever in the old city, and practically none in the new. Rubbish and filth might be thrown into the streets, many of which are blind alleys, and allowed to accumulate. There was no provision of any kind for its removal. In most Oriental cities it is the same, the only scavengers being the ownerless dogs everywhere plentiful. The water supply was derived from a few large pools and the ordinary private rain-fed cisterns in the courtyards of the houses. In this matter the Turks left the city worse than they found it. They had no pipe supply or reservoirs of any kind outside the region of the city. In Roman times water was drawn through an aqueduct from springheads southwest of Bethlehem, which fed three reservoirs called Solomon's Pools, and served to rock cut and masonry conduits to the city. Within a few months of the capture of Jerusalem, in 1917, the British Army authorities had constructed a new water supply. A six-inch gravity pipe line 13 miles long was laid from Birket Et-A Arrub midway between Bethlehem and Hebron, and by its means the city was fairly well supplied with good water. There must have been great need for this. During my stay I saw one afternoon quite a large crowd, mostly women, armed with buckets and disused petrol tins waiting to obtain water from a tap just inside the Damascus Gate. Since then I understand arrangements have been made for additional supplies to be drawn from the "Pools of Solomon," formerly used by the Romans, a short distance from Bethlehem, which will double the present pipe water supply of the city. A street sweeper was appointed to keep the Via Dolorosa free from rubbish, and doubtless further sanitary provision will be made with the progress of time.

Until recent times there were few hotels in the Holy City, and a stranger is at first at a loss to comprehend how thousands of pilgrims can be adequately housed. The

explanation is found in the Hospices provided by the various religious communities.

The Russians have a vast establishment outside the walls capable of accommodating thousands of pilgrims.

The French possess several immense places, the largest being the Notre Dame de France Hospice, which has six hundred rooms.

The imposing German building erected after the Kaiser's visit has been referred to, and there is an Austrian Hospice, too.

The Italians have several commodious places, including the Casa Nova, which has room for 500. The Armenians and Abyssinians also have their own houses. During my visit, I stayed with the Franciscan Fathers at Casa Nova, and if the accommodation there provided for ordinary pilgrims is typical of Jerusalem hotels, pilgrims have little to complain of.

Everything was scrupulously clean, each bedroom neat and comfortable, and an atmosphere of quiet repose pervaded the whole house. The food was good, and though not always in harmony with Western ideas, afforded that change of diet which we are told is good for the health.

The whole condition necessary for admission to Casa Nova in the matter of religion is the profession of belief in some form of Christianity. Non-Catholics are required to pay a moderate fee for what they receive. Catholics make an offering according to their pleasure, no charge being made to them, since Catholics the world over contribute (or should contribute) to the support of the Holy Places and their guardians.

#### OPPOSITION OF THE ORTHODOX GREEKS.

Not all the Christian communities in the Holy City acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. The orthodox Greek Church, though not heretical, is cut off from Catholic unity by schism. Unfortunately these Greeks are the worst enemies the Church has to contend with, worse even than the Turks.

After the Crusades, when the infidel had expelled the Christians from the country, the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem deserted his post. The Pope appointed the Franciscan Fathers as his own deputies in the Guardianship

of the Holy Places, and faithfully did they keep the trust reposed in them.

Through centuries of terrible persecution and even martyrdom at the hands of the infidel, and amid poverty, insults, and hard missionary labors in an atmosphere of heat, pestilence, and strife, and often war, the heroic sons of St. Francis remained at their post.

The Greeks came back gradually as conditions improved, and their hatred and jealousy knew no bounds. They resorted to bribery and trickery of the basest sort to expel the Franciscans from the Holy Places. With corrupt Turkish officials to deal with, and the power of Russia behind them, they achieved some measure of success. The Turks were not displeased at the discord among the Christians, while they thrived on the disputes provoked by the Greeks, and pocketed the gold received as payment for privileges granted at the expense of the Franciscans. However, it is a long lane that has no turning.

#### ORTHODOX GREEKS IN FINANCIAL STRAITS.

A semi-official publication in 1923 records that the British Civil Administration "found the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem in a state of tribulation partly owing to monetary difficulties caused by the cessation of financial supplies from Russia." This means that Russian Bolshevism has abolished, as far as in it lay, the Greek Orthodox Church (a very wealthy body), to which practically all the Russians belonged. It means, moreover, that Bolshevik rule, the hindrances it is able to put in the way of travelers and the dreadful poverty of the Russian peasants have completely stopped the influx of Russian pilgrims who before the war came to Jerusalem each year to the number of about ten thousand. \* \* \* Whatever money these unsophisticated folk brought from Russia the Greek Church authorities gathered in, enriching themselves and adding to their influence with the Turks with whom money is omnipotent. For several years not one single peasant pilgrim has come from Russia. The consequence is that the Orthodox Greeks in Jerusalem are faced with poverty, and may be forced by circumstances to relinquish their hold on certain of the Holy Places, which rightly pertain to the Franciscan guardianship.

Other Catholic communities may also be able by direct purchase to secure possession of buildings or sites in the Holy City formerly in Catholic hands which association with Our Divine Lord has made venerable in the estimation of all Christians.

The Dominican Fathers of the Ecole Biblique of St. Stephen Jerusalem (now the official Archaeological School of France in Palestine) are doing extremely valuable work in identifying places of sacred interest. They have published full and admirable monographs on Jerusalem, Hebron, and Bethlehem, and at Jericho and other centres have made important excavations and discoveries of supreme archaeological value. \* \* \* According to custom prevailing from time immemorial, all work ceases at sunset, and everybody retires to rest soon after. Jerusalem is certainly a peaceful, restful city after dark, and as I looked out at the quiet beauty of the stars, shining with rich luster in the clear eastern sky, I felt grateful for one spot at least where the hoot of the motor is silent, and the clamor that disturbs the tranquillity of the night in the cities of the West is mercifully absent.

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## The Mystery of the Eucharist

HILAIRE BELLOC.

*Reprinted from "Catholic Truth."*

"The idea that a priest can change the substance of bread by saying words over it is intellectually intolerable."—Dr. Barnes, of Birmingham, on January 20, 1925.

**L**AWYERS use the valuable term "an issue"; by which they mean the statement of opposing claims without ambiguity and each put in terms which the opposing party admits.

Until such an "issue" is arrived at no case can proceed, for all argument upon it would be at cross purposes.

Thus, if I claim that Tom Jones sold me his pig and that I paid him, but that he has not delivered the pig, then, if Tom Jones answers either that he has delivered the pig or that I never paid him, there is an "issue." But so long as Tom Jones answers me by saying that it is foolish of me to talk so much about pigs, or that it would

be interesting to discuss whether pigs really exist, there is no issue, and nothing can go forward. All attempts to decide the claim would be a waste of time.

Now we ought always to be grateful for anyone who provides us with such an "issue" in any controversy, and grateful in proportion to the importance of the subject. In the tremendous controversy between the Catholic Church and its opponents (which is the thing of chief practical importance in the modern world), nine-tenths of our trouble, especially in this country, comes from the fact that our opponents will not present us with an "issue." They are perpetually suggesting argument upon matters which do not lead to the conclusion either party desires to establish. They especially delight in verbiage designed to confuse thought or to conceal conclusions to which they have certainly come, but which they think it would be awkward to proclaim.

Now Dr. Barnes has here very kindly produced a definite "issue," and if his admirable example of candor spreads we shall soon be out of the wood. We shall be able to take up the intellectual combat with full force upon either side and presumably sooner or later arrive at a decision.

I do not suggest that Dr. Barnes is an opponent worthy of the Catholic Church for he has clearly not read enough, either in history or in contemporary science, to be called that. He thinks (for instance) that Charles Darwin invented the immemorial idea of evolution; and he thinks that Charles Darwin's only original contribution to that age-long discussion (to wit, his Theory of Natural Selection) is still accepted by the intellect of Europe; in which he is anything from twenty-five to thirty years behind the times, for the doctrine is exploded and dead. Nor has he any sufficient reading of theology or he could not have said, as he recently did, that the Resurrection had been disproved by modern chemistry.

But he has done what no other of his colleagues has yet done. He has stated at least one of the great questions straightforwardly.

He has not said with regard to the mystery of the Eucharist, as did Gibbon and all the sceptics of his time,

that it is nonsense. That is no basis for argument; it is a mere affirmation without support. He has not said that it is demonstrably false as so many do—and then avoid the demonstration because no such demonstration is possible. He has not appealed to bad history as do so many, or pretended that the doctrine of the Eucharist came as a slow pagan corruption. Those who wish to rely upon that line find themselves more and more driven to neglect all context and all the mood of society in the various epochs of the past to which they refer. He has not—and we must particularly thank him for this—cut across the great debate with the stupidest of all irrelevancies, I mean an appeal to the “modern mind” or the “latest conclusions,” or the “best authorities”; no, he has put the great issue in its exact terms: one faith opposing another.

For Dr. Barnes’ statement implies a conflict between two faiths. It is tantamount to saying, *not* “you are under an illusion which I can dispel by evidence,” *but* “you hold one philosophy and I another contradictory philosophy.” He has expressed a fixed attitude of mind for which, as it is clearly a faith, he can, no doubt, give reasons; but which he does not repose upon reason. He advances that this particular mystery of the Sacrament—and perhaps all other mysteries—is “intellectually intolerable” to him. The affirmation shocks a profound conviction in him which is of the very character of faith; so that we are left, when we would deal with such an opponent, with the true appeal to all those converging proofs drawn from practise, experience, homogeneity and social effect, which, with a hundred others, confirm our faith and dissipate his. It is like being back in the old, clear and high thinking of the eighteenth century when Hume could say that, no matter what evidence was produced for a miracle, that evidence would never convince him that a miracle could take place.

I am afraid that some of our opponents will think me a little disingenuous in my ardent appeal to them to state issues for the future as clearly as Dr. Barnes has done. Most of them know as well as I do that, when you begin to put issues truly and simply, you are giving the Catholic Church a very great advantage indeed. They are even, perhaps, saying now, among themselves, that they wish

Dr. Barnes had refrained from speaking after a fashion so unusually clear for his side of the conflict.

I admit this. I admit, not that I am disingenuous in my demand, but that the presentation of an issue is to the advantage of Catholicism as it is so that of all truth. The right side in any controversy is always advantaged by clear definition. But I must ask our opponents to believe that I also rejoice in this belated appearance of clear statement on their side, for baser reasons. Clear thinking saves the nerves. It saves worry.

Can it be possible that we are on the eve of a day when we of the Faith shall be able to argue with opponents capable of exact statement, and shall so engage in those great and fruitful controversies which our fathers knew, but of which the modern world seemed incapable? I hope it is so. And now we have had this very plain declaration upon the Eucharist, let us earnestly demand another "equally plain" from the spokesmen of the Church of England upon the Resurrection, the Incarnation, the personality of the Godhead, and the rest of the fundamentals. Then we shall know where we are.

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## Our National Eucharistic Shrine

JOHN LA FARGE, S. J.

THE forgetfulness with which St. Mary's City, the landing place of the Maryland pilgrims, suffers from Catholics is hard to explain, even though up to recent years the spot could be reached only by a long water journey. To-day, however, by a motor trip of seventy-one miles the trip can easily be made on the splendid State road from Washington, D. C. Bus lines, too, run direct to the spot in Summer, and there are good accommodations at points further down the State road. No mark, however, greets the traveler, as he arrives at this beautiful spot to remind him of its Catholic associations. Just as at Blakiston Island, further up the Potomac, there is no memorial of the first mass in the Maryland colony, so in St. Mary's City there is nothing to remind the traveler of the first Catholic chapel erected in the American colonies. How different from Plymouth Rock, and other points of no greater national interest!

Old St. Mary's chapel disappeared in 1706, having been closed by the order of Governor Seymour and his council which is still extant in the published archives of Maryland. But although the very bricks of which the chapel was built were transported elsewhere, its erection marks the beginning of the Eucharistic Residence of Our Saviour in the heart of our future Republic. Certainly the arrival and beginning of a permanent residence for the Blessed Sacrament in this country, a residence which from the date of the first mass, March 25, 1634, has been practically unbroken to the present day, is a fact of infinitely greater interest and value, both spiritually and historically, than the arrival of any pilgrims or colonists on our shores. St. Mary's County, therefore, and St. Mary's City in particular, call on us for national veneration as the first Eucharistic Home of Our Saviour.

Worthy of veneration, too, and commemoration are those early missionaries whose devotion and zeal made that Eucharistic presence possible on our shores. Men like Fathers Rigbie, Knowles and Hartwell, if not actually martyrs, were as close to martyrdom as sufferings and violent persecutions for Christ's name, short of actual bloodshed, could bring them.

From the same Eucharistic source our earliest Catholic laymen and women derived the spiritual strength necessary for them to endure the spiritual as well as the physical difficulties of the early Maryland colony. Certainly our Catholic Men's Council of to-day can look back with pride to the example of men like Thomas Cornwaleys, Giles Brent, Jerome Hawle, Thomas Matthews, Cuthbert Fenwick, or Thomas Gerard. Margaret Brent, too, should not be forgotten as the first woman to demand the suffrage as her right in this country, the first woman to act as attorney, the first woman to receive from a legislative assembly a public testimonial to her character and her services in the public interest.

Two virtues stood out in the lives of the early Catholic colonists: their simple, uncompromising piety, joined, in happy combination, with charity and toleration for men of other beliefs. The spirit, too, of George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, although he died before the actual foundation of the Maryland colony, can be truly honored as the

spirit which should possess the apostolic Catholic laymen of today. In his Charter (sections X and XVIII), he not only provides for religious freedom and toleration, but, as a matter less frequently adverted to, he lays the foundation of true social welfare by removing, in his new colony, those unjust restrictions on charitable, educational and religious foundations which had been the curse of England, a mere legal excuse for the rapacities of an Elizabeth or an Edward VI. Certainly if later hands had been as truly loyal to the liberal and truly social program of George Calvert, the growth of religion, education and charitable works in the early colonies would have been hastened, and the colony better prepared to withstand the shock of Protestant persecution.

Yet it is consoling that the very suppression of early Catholic undertakings led ultimately to that great spread of missionary, educational and charitable endeavor by which the Faith and its works were spread to Pennsylvania, to Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey, and even to distant Kentucky, and finally to the farthest regions of our continent, till today the greater part of our great country looks to St. Mary's City as the starting point of Catholic development.

Two or three practical suggestions, therefore, can be made with regard to St. Mary's City, especially in view of the approaching Tercentenary of 1934. One is the national observance of March 25 as "Catholic Day" throughout the United States, which happily coincides with one of the most beautiful feasts of Our Lady. Today, too, the Church calls for new George Calverts, men to whom business or social advantages count as nothing compared with the opportunity to serve God and their fellow man, to make our laymen's movement fruitful and truly apostolic. Another is an educational monument, in the spirit of George Calvert, to provide for the proper education of the existing Catholic population in the neighborhood of St. Mary's City, a work already undertaken by the Jesuit Fathers now laboring there. Again, a shrine should eventually be built, where, in memory of the arrival of the Eucharistic Saviour on our shores, our Catholic men's and women's organizations of this country may repair, from time to time, and renew their spirit of zeal and

charity, from the same source as did those hardy men and women who, nearly three hundred years ago, knelt before the only altar in what was then an immeasurable wilderness.

## The Sequences of the Liturgy

*Reprinted from "Catholic Truth."*

MANY of us take our possessions too much for granted and casually turn the pages of our Missal quite failing to realize the beauty and significance of its prayers: the many minds and varied material which have had a share in their making, or the thought and anxious care which has been expended in the compiling of the whole work. Here we are concerned with only a small portion of the Missal, and the whole Missal forms but a tithe of the Church's Liturgy; but even in so small a section we shall find expressed the devotional thoughts of quite different types of mind stretching over 1,000 years. The Doxologies dawned amid persecution in the catacombs, while Aquinas harvests and sows again at the summit of the fullest Christian civilization that the world has yet seen.

The Prose or Sequence was originally only a prolongation of the last note of the Post-Gradual *Alleluia*, and it was to vary this monotony that appropriate words came to be inserted. The earliest known author is Notker, a monk in the famous monastery of St. Gall about 880: but he himself tells us that he saw some notes and verses for Sequences in an antiphonary of Jumièges (near Rouen), so it is probable that this form of poetry originated in France, and that Notker was its first known and most prominent exponent in Switzerland and Germany. From this date onward the Sequence grew in popularity, and many medieval Missals inserted one on every Sunday and feast. The development, though widespread in the West, has left the Eastern Liturgies untouched; but the 5,000 Sequences of varying value now known certainly exercised an influence on poetry and music in Europe, and form a testimony to the Christian literary activity of seven centuries. Some, however, were very slipshod in

thought and construction; the fifteenth century particularly witnessed a rapid decline; and in the sixteenth century revision of the Missal only four are retained.

The *Stabat Mater* must have been included at a comparatively recent date, for neither Le Brun nor Benedict XIV recognizes it. Besides these five there are other Sequences found in the Missals of religious orders, and the Lyons Missal (in use until a few years ago) contains some which are very beautiful.

In the Roman Missal the earliest Sequence in date of composition is the "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*," attributed to Robert the Pious, and son of the famous Hugh Capet. One sympathizes with Robert; a square peg in a round hole if ever there was one. His long reign suggests points of contact with that of our own Henry VI. Both were saintly, studious and cultivated men; and neither was fitted to master the warlike society in which he lived. Robert struggled unsuccessfully for many years to settle the bickerings between his northern barons and the southern followers of his queen, Constance of Aquitaine. In addition, his last years were grievously saddened by "domestic fury and fierce civil strife," endless disputes between feudal clergy and nobles, and the rebellion of his own sons. The heritage of Hugh Capet was indeed a heavy one, and one thinks with sympathy of the poor king, lonely in his uncongenial surroundings and turning for sympathy and companionship to "the soul's delightful Guest," whom he must have loved so deeply and whose grace and heavenly aid he sought in soul solitude at the crowded court. There is something wistful in the shadowy figure of this king; who as a king failed, but whose oblivion becomes fame, thanks to his poem in honor of that Spirit who surely cherishes the gift, seeing that He has chosen it from among many to hold a place in His storehouse.

Of nearly the same date is the Easter Sequence, "*Victima Paschali*," attributed to Wipso, chaplain and biographer to the Emperor Conrad II, who reigned in the early half of the eleventh century. A strange time this with France and Germany struggling to consolidate an insecure power; England still ruled by her Saxon kings, and the Papacy at low ebb, but soon to shake itself free

from the numbing grip of imperial domination, thanks to Cluny, the bright star of whose reform already illumined the night.

To the thirteenth century belongs the inspiration of the three remaining Sequences found in our Missal to-day. The *Lauda Sion* composed by St. Thomas Aquinas forms part of the office for the (then newly established) feast of Corpus Christi: but both the life of St. Thomas Aquinas and his work are too well known to need comment in an outline such as the present.

A complete antithesis in mind and character from St. Thomas seems to have been Jacopone da Todi. He grew up hard, luxury-loving, and worldly minded, and had already achieved considerable success at his profession of the law when the sudden and tragic death of his young wife caused him to abandon his career. His grief was overwhelming, and the impression it left tremendous; for a hair shirt had been found upon the corpse beneath her gorgeous attire, and the thought thrust itself home—for whom had she done penance but for her husband and his sins. For the next ten years Jacopone roamed to and fro among the Umbrian villages and cities, often scoffed at as a madman, and emulating the more extravagant forms of penance and humiliation recorded of St. Francis and his early followers. This mode of life and the outlook that prompted it is briefly described in a couplet of his own composition:

“A wise and courteous choice he'd make  
Who'd be a fool for the dear Lord's sake.”

At the end of this time he gained admittance to a Franciscan convent and threw himself heart and soul into the cause of the Spirituals (those friars who wished to imitate to the letter the personal manner of life of St. Francis). His zeal was to land him into some trouble and in 1298, having signed the Colonna Manifesto against Boniface VIII, he was imprisoned by the Pontiff, and excepted even from the general amnesty which was granted to prisoners on the occasion of the Holy Year of Jubilee of 1300. Jacopone composed poems in his dungeon, and seven volumes of his verses in the Umbrian dialect have come down to us; many of them have a charm and vigor

not unworthy to find a place in company of the Canticle of Brother Sun.

It is uncertain to which period of his life belong the *Stabat Mater* and its companion poem, the Cradle hymn, *Stabat Mater Speciosa*. The passionate love and outpouring of the former and the vivid power of identifying himself with the emotions described are all in harmony with what we know of Jacopone's character and with the poetic intensity of this converted penitent.

On the death of Pope Boniface he was released, and for the last three years of his life lived as a hermit. His friendship with the saintly John of Alverna redeems the harsher side of his character, and the almost miraculous arrival of John at Jacopone's deathbed forms one of the many touching and picturesque episodes recorded in Franciscan annals. He died in the year 1306 as the Gloria was being intoned at Midnight Mass. Fervent and zealous, Jacopone undoubtedly was, but his character seems to have lacked balance, and this fact, combined with the relentless hatred he displayed towards Boniface VIII (an opponent of the Spirituals), has prevented the success of any steps taken towards his canonization.

The *Dies Irae* is also the work of a Franciscan; one, too, who was a contemporary of St. Francis, and his first biographer; Fra Tomaso da Celano, 1200-1255. It is probable that he joined the Friars Minor when only fifteen, and it was to his care that Gregory IX entrusted the compilation of the *Vita Prima*, later supplemented by the *Vita Secunda*. He also wrote a life of St. Clare, and two Sequences in honor of his patron; but his genius is most forcibly expressed in the wailing tones of the *Dies Irae*, which has been described as a "masterpiece of Latin poetry and the most sublime of all uninspired hymns."

## Confession

A TEACHING SISTER.

*Reprinted from the Auckland, New Zealand, "Month."*

FTER grounding the children in the knowledge of the Commandments and the motives for observing them, we come to the means appointed by Our Saviour for repairing the losses we incur by our breaches of His divine law—the Sacrament of Penance.

Gerson, the famous teacher and theologian of the University of Paris, after enumerating several means well calculated to lead children back to Christ, adds: "Others may have their personal opinion on this subject, but as for myself I am convinced that confession, if rightly received, affords the surest way to Christ."

The importance of a thorough preparation for confession is demonstrated only too clearly by the lamentable falling off in Christian virtue and morals to be found wherever this sacrament is seldom received or is received in a careless manner.

Objections have been raised to the practise of taking children in a body to confession each week as a part of the school routine. It is contended that the children should be taught to come of their own free will to confession on a Saturday, and that their regularity in doing so is a good test of the efficacy of their religious training. But this is not at all a fair test. In the first place, the children very often have not the disposal of their own time on Saturdays. Some parents, especially in a country like this where mixed marriages are so common, would often purposely deter their children from going to confession each week; while in other cases, the need of the children's help or some other such cause would often make it difficult for children to practise frequent confession. Moreover, it is too much to expect of ordinary children that they will begin so young to direct their own course in such an important matter. We do not expect it of them in other things. How many children could

be trusted to go regularly to school or even to keep themselves clean and tidy, if left at all to themselves? In all these matters vigilance and care are necessary until good habits are formed and well-trained characters developed. It must be admitted, however, that the practise of weekly confession as part of the school course is effective only when it is backed up by constant instruction and a thorough preparation.

#### THE ESSENTIALS NEED CONSTANT REPETITION.

There is some reason to fear that, in our desire to equip our children with the knowledge sufficient to answer the hundred and one objections that may be raised by non-Catholics to the teachings of our holy faith, we do not manage to spare sufficient time for drilling our children in those essentials—the Sacraments, Holy Mass, prayer, etc.—that most tend to develop in them a true and strong Catholic life, which, after all, will do more than all else to promote their own happiness and the edification of others. Experience proves that the practise of weekly confession for school children has excellent results when at least a part of the catechism lesson is set apart one day each week for instruction on the Sacrament, preferably, of course, either the day on which they go to confession or the day before.

Children have now the privilege of receiving their first Holy Communion at so early an age that it may be as well to point out the advisability of getting them accustomed to the Sacrament of Penance at least some little time beforehand, in order that the fear which sometimes accompanies a first confession may not diminish their fervor in receiving Our Blessed Lord for the first time.

If properly trained, it becomes natural for a Catholic child to have a special love for the Sacrament of Penance. The innocent heart of a little child is easily troubled over the slightest wrongdoing, and he is not comforted until he has acknowledged and confessed his fault. This natural uneasiness on the part of the child finds a most wholesome relief in the Sacrament of Confession. Universal experience proves that it is not at all burdensome or hateful to children, provided they have been properly

taught and trained. The assurance of the forgiveness of sin given by the minister and representative of God calms and comforts the heart of a youthful transgressor and gives him new courage to do better for the future.

Older children who are apt to become less sensitive to the detrimental effects of even small sins may be spurred on to a desire for frequent confession by appealing to their love of what is new and unspotted. They like new clothes, new books, etc. Well, each time a child receives the Sacrament of Penance worthily its soul is washed whiter than snow in Our Saviour's Precious Blood and leaves the confessional perfumed and beautified in the sight of God and the angels.

#### AN APPEAL TO THE SENSES.

A worthy missionary priest used to make an effective appeal at children's missions by representing sin as an ulcer on the soul which gave out so offensive a stench as to be hateful to God and His angels. His illustrative story was that an ancient hermit and his angel guardian were once walking across a desert when they came upon the decaying corpse of a dead dog. The hermit hastened to get away from a sight and stench which he found so objectionable, but the angel did not seem to be much moved. Before long, however, they came across a handsome, well-dressed man, and now it was the angel's turn to be perturbed and disgusted and to hasten away. He explained that, in spite of the man's outwardly fair appearance, his soul was so diseased with sin as to make it incomparably more horrible than the decaying corpse they had just passed.

Such appeals to the senses are necessary to give young children some idea of the harm caused to the soul by sin; and although it is most important to teach them clearly the distinction between venial and mortal sin, yet they should be trained to have a lively horror for even venial sins, since these lead so inevitably to greater mischief if they are not checked. If we can train a child to use the Sacrament of Penance to overcome his daily faults, we shall have done very much indeed to ensure that he will not easily slip into any serious sin.

"I have nothing to tell" is sometimes put forward by

thoughtless children as a pretext for avoiding frequent confession. It shows, of course, a want of self-knowledge, but, in order to avoid it, and also in order to secure that the children will tell some sin for which they are truly contrite, it is well to train them in the custom of telling a sin of their past life. Very few children can boast that they have never told a deliberate untruth in their lives, and for ordinarily good children who, please God, are not likely to have violated purity to any extent, a sin against truth in one's past life is generally most likely to afford sufficient matter for absolution since its wrongfulness is easy to bring home to children and a purpose of amendment more likely to be secured. The benefit of thus developing a love for truth itself is also obvious.